

referred to ECOWAS, the Economic Community of West African States, and SADC, the South African Development Community.

Statement on a Third Consecutive Budget Surplus

February 18, 2000

Today we received further evidence that our economic strategy of fiscal discipline is working. When I came into office, the debt had quadrupled over the previous 12 years. The deficit had reached a record \$290 billion and was projected to keep rising as far as the eye could see. As a result, interest rates were high and growth was slow. We have turned this around with strong deficit reduction packages in 1993 and 1997 and tough choices in each and every budget. As a result, we have enjoyed back-to-back budget surpluses for the first time in over 40 years.

The latest financial numbers from the Department of the Treasury indicate that we are on track this year to reach a third consecutive budget surplus. The surplus in the first 4 months of this fiscal year was \$25 billion larger than the surplus last year. These surpluses will allow us to repay a projected \$157 billion in debt this year alone, bringing the debt reduction over 3 years to nearly \$300 billion. If we maintain our strategy of fiscal discipline, we can keep our economy strong and pay down the debt by 2013 for the first time since Andrew Jackson was President.

Message on the Observance of Presidents' Day, 2000

February 18, 2000

I am pleased to join all Americans in observing Presidents' Day.

Today we salute the leadership and achievements of all those who have held America's highest elected office, and we celebrate with special pride the rich legacies of Presidents Washington and Lincoln.

As our first President, George Washington gave strength and legitimacy to our young democracy while ensuring that the newly formed federal government remained accountable to the American people. A leader

of exceptional courage and vision in both war and peace, he helped shape the 13 colonies into a nation dedicated to the values of liberty and justice for all.

More than 70 years later, Abraham Lincoln sought to reunite Americans behind these same fundamental values. Through the extraordinary hardship and sacrifice of the Civil War, he remained devoted to the causes of freedom and equality and to preserving our Union. In the waning days of that cruel conflict, he showed remarkable compassion and determination in his efforts to bind our nation's wounds and restore dignity to all our people.

It was within view of our national monuments to these two great leaders that thousands of our fellow Americans recently joined Hillary and me to welcome the first moments of the 21st century. The era of unrivaled prosperity and peace in which we now live affords us a singular opportunity to reaffirm the values that guided Washington and Lincoln and that have shaped our national character and destiny for more than 200 years. By strengthening our democracy, embracing equal justice and opportunity, and celebrating our diversity, we can continue to build the America that they envisioned and strived so hard to achieve.

Best wishes to all for a wonderful celebration.

Bill Clinton

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

February 15

In the morning, the President met with President Heydar Aliyev of Azerbaijan in the Oval Office.

The President announced his intention to appoint Rear Adm. Keith W. Lippert as a member of the Committee for the Purchase

From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled.

The President announced his intention to appoint Rabbi Irving Greenberg as chair of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council.

The President announced his intention to appoint James V. Kimsey to the Board of Trustees of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

The President announced his intention to appoint Salvador Diaz-Verson as a member of the Christopher Columbus Fellowship Foundation.

The President declared a major disaster in Louisiana and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by a severe winter storm on January 27–30.

The President declared a major disaster in Georgia and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and tornadoes on February 14.

February 16

The President announced his intention to appoint Alice A. Kelikian as a member of the Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad.

The White House announced that the President directed Health and Human Services Secretary Donna E. Shalala to release an additional \$120 million in Low Income Home Energy Assistance emergency funds for States, territories, and tribes due to continuing increases in home heating fuel prices.

February 17

The President declared a major disaster in Alaska and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe winter storms and avalanches beginning on December 21, 1999, and continuing.

February 18

The President declared a major disaster in Alabama and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by a severe winter storm on January 22–29.

Nominations Submitted to the Senate

NOTE: No nominations were submitted to the Senate during the period covered by this issue.

Checklist of White House Press Releases

The following list contains releases of the Office of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as items nor covered by entries in the Digest of Other White House Announcements.

Released February 14

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Released February 15

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Transcript of a press briefing by Chief of Staff John Podesta, Secretary of Commerce Bill Daley, President of Information Technology Association of America Harris Miller, President of eBay Technologies Maynard Webb, and Chief Information Officer of Microsoft Howard Schmidt on the President's meeting on cyber security.

Fact sheet: Cyber Security Budget Initiatives

Fact sheet: Strengthening Cyber Security through Public-Private Partnership

Released February 16

Statement by the Press Secretary: Federal Panel Continuation to Declassify Selected Historically Valuable Documents

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing action on Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program

Released February 17

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy Press Secretary Jake Siewert and NSC Spokesman David Leavy

Fact sheet: Solidifying our Partnership with Africa